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Encl: Memorandum on Dabus Nor, Chahar Province, 4 pages, 1 map.

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DABUS NOR, CHAHAR PROVINCE

1. The lake is situated at approximately 116-30, 45-10*, about 85 kilometers to the northwest of the Ujumuchin Right Banner Government in SMilingol League of Chahar Province. The trip to the salt lake from the banner government takes from about two and a half hours to three hours by truck. Since the lake is situated on the boundary between Ujumuchin Right Banner and Hochit Left Banner, it is under the jurisdiction of both banners, and is supervised by the officials from the two banners.

* Mueller's Map of All Mongolia; Peiping, 1939
New Map of Mongolia; South Manchurian Railway; Dairen, 31 March 1940
Map of China; National Geographic Society
2. The fact that salt from this lake was extracted on a large-scale is mentioned in ancient Chinese history in the books of The History of Liao and the History of Chin (遼史 金史), and has appeared in publications down through the years to the more modern ones such as Records of the Mongol Pastures (蒙古遊牧記); preface dated 1859, Mongolian Topography (蒙古地誌), by Takahisa Kashiwara; Tokyo, 28 December 1919, Mongolian Year Book; Tokyo, 20 May 1936, Mongolian Outlook; Tokyo, 8 May 1939, and a great many others. Therefore, large quantities of salt have been taken from this lake for at least the last one thousand years.
3. In the past this salt was transported to and consumed in eastern Mongolian Peoples Republic (MPR), SMilingol League, Jooda League, Josoto League and Jirum League. With the advancement of the railways in Manchuria during the early part of the twentieth century, salt obtained from the sea could be transported cheaply and so the region of consumption of the salt from Dabus Nor narrowed somewhat, but even in 1945, it was still being consumed in practically all of SMilingol League, the whole of Jooda League, and the northern part of Jirum League. During 1946 to 1948, this lake became quite important to the Chinese Communists since the Nationalist Army held the sea salt producing area in Manchuria. During 1947, the salt from this lake was being transported as far south as the Chihfeng (119-00, 42-18) region in Jehol Province and as far east as Fuyu (124-49, 45-11). Although they did not receive a sufficient supply, the people in these regions were benefited somewhat. However, since the Chinese Communists seized the Manchurian sea salt producing regions during the autumn of 1948, the salt from Dabus Nor will once again be greatly valued as it was in 1945, and the region of consumption will probably be the same as it was then. The reason is that the cost of transportation will greatly limit the supply of sea salt to those areas. Dabus Nor will not fail to play an important part in supplying the Chinese Communists with much needed salt.

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ENCLOSURE #1

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4. Since documents of detailed investigations on the quantity of salt extracted from this lake are not available, an exact figure cannot be given. The Mongolian Year Book states that approximately 250,000 piculs are extracted each year. However, this figure varies according to the needs at the point of consumption, the cost, and the transportation conditions between the lake and the point of consumption. The actual 'season' in which the salt is extracted is four months long, and begins in May and lasts until September. In June 1938 when Source inspected the salt lake, approximately 800 wagon-loads of salt were obtained in one day, one wagon-load averaging 400 pounds. Speaking to one of the workers, Source stated: "You certainly got a lot of salt today", whereupon the worker replied: "No, this is just an ordinary day. The days when we get a lot of salt, we pass the one thousand mark". Judging from this, it is believed that 40,000,000 pounds per year is a more accurate production figure. If the necessity arises, this amount can be easily increased. In the past, production figures were announced by the Manchoukuo Government Monopoly Office and the Mongolian Government (Te Wang Government) Monopoly Office, but these figures cannot be accepted as the actual production figure. The reason is that these figures represent the amount purchased by the Monopoly Office, and do not include the large amount sold secretly, or that amount consumed by the people in Skilingol League. In other words, the only accurate production figures existing are in the books of the supervisor of the salt lake which are treated as 'top secret'.
5. The salt is obtained from the northwestern part of the lake (See Attachment), with the depth of the water being from two to three feet. On the bottom of the lake, there are spouts approximately two feet in diameter through which water, with a high content of salt, pours out. The salt settles on the bottom of the lake, forming a layer of salt from five inches to one foot in thickness. The salt is in the shape of small crystals, and at times these are joined together in clumps. The workers simply scoop up the salt from the bottom of the lake with shovels and load it on the wagons. By the next day, another layer of salt has formed on the bottom of the lake. However, there are times when the amount of the salt decreases or increases according to the weather. When the amount decreases, the workers believe that it is due to the wrath of the Gods, and so invite Lamas from the nearby temple to read scriptures to appease Them. (The above information was obtained by Source when he visited the salt lake in June 1938. Source was not allowed to go into the lake, because according to Mongolian superstition if a woman, foreigner or a donkey goes into this lake, the Gods will immediately decrease the supply of salt. The greatest fear the Mongolians have is that a Chinese might go into it).
6. To those who believe in Shamanism, salt is a sacred thing, but the Mongolians also look upon salt in the same light. As a result this lake is looked upon as being very sacred by the Mongolians, and they believe that this lake was given them by God to assist them. To the backward Mongolian, the endless supply of salt from this lake must be a mystery. The tax on the salt obtained from this lake is collected by the Ujumuchin Right Banner and

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Hochit Left Banner Government offices. (NOTE: When the people from these banners obtain the salt, there is a tax exemption). The rate of the salt tax is one silver tael per two wagon-loads of salt. This becomes the income of the government offices of both banners, and according to a government official of Ujumuchin Right Banner, this amounts to more than 10,000 taels of silver per year per banner. Ujumuchin Right Banner has the biggest population among the banners in Smilingol League, and yet it is the richest and has the most political influence. The people obtain the salt from the lake without tax and export it to the outside for food, and other necessities. Those who do not possess livestock and cannot become nomads, work at the salt lake during the 'season', and then join salt transporting caravans during the 'off season'. In this way, this salt lake has served as an important factor in the happiness and well-being of the people in both banners.

7. During the summer months, the workers coming to this lake from the various banners of Mongolia form a small Mongolian community around the lake. Since this presented a convenient opportunity to gather information, the Wangyehmiao (122-01, 46-05) Tokumu Kikan (Intelligence Organization) set up a liaison station at Dabus Sume (temple) on the northwest side of the lake during the winter of 1937. One of the MPR intelligence bases directed towards Inner Mongolia was situated at Yugujur (115-35, 45-45) and when MPR agents penetrated into Inner Mongolia they passed by this lake on a number of occasions. Also, during the summer months, numerous MPR agents were sent to this lake to gather information, and it subsequently became an intelligence 'battle-ground' between the Japanese and the Soviets. The MPR also utilized destitute Mongolians and had them secretly transport salt to the MPR border, where they were given a high price for it either in the form of silver or cotton goods to please them and eventually use them in intelligence work. As a result, a great deal of attention was paid to this area by the intelligence organizations of Japan and the USSR.
8. During the Second World War when Japan was in great need of potassium, a large-scale investigation of this lake was carried out since the salt was said to have a large content of potassium. This was in 1942.
9. The salt from this lake has a very good flavor, and does not have the bitterness of sea salt. The Mongolians do not like the taste of sea salt, and so this lake is a necessity for them. They call the salt Huhe Dabus (Blue Salt), blue being the symbol of Mongolia. Therefore the demand for this 'sacred' salt in Inner Mongolia will not lessen in the future. At one time during the Manchoukuo regime, the Monopoly Bureau imported some sea salt into Inner Mongolian territory for distribution among the Mongolians, but because the people protested this system had to be discontinued.
10. The following references are given for a more detailed study of Dabus Nor:
 - Mongolian Topography; by Takahisa Kashiwara; Tokyo, 1920
 - Mongolian Year Book; Good Neighbors Association, Tokyo, 20 May 1936
 - Mongolian Salt in Jehol; Investigation Section of the General Hsingan Bureau, Hsinking, 1934.
 - On Mongolian Salt; Manchoukuo Salt Bureau, Hsinking, 1934
 - Natural Salt in Eastern Mongolia; Sanezo Kikutake, Dairen, 1930
 - Industry and Trade in Progressive Mengchiang; Muneo Tanaka, Kobe, 1943

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Explanation of the map:

1. The Mongolians who live in the Dabus Nor region call the lake Eji (meaning aunt).
2. There is another smaller salt lake approximately five miles to the south west of Dabus Nor which is called Baga Eji (small aunt). The salt content in this lake is very great, but salt is not being extracted from it.
3. The roads used in transporting the salt from the lake form a web around the lake, but only the principal roads have been shown on the map.
4. Reference:

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Surface of the lake

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Area from which salt is extracted

X

Point at which salt is extracted

X X X X

Area which is not covered with water except when it rains

5. The hills to the east and west of the lake are approximately thirty meters in height and are lazy slopes. The Dabus mountain to the north of Dabus Sume is the highest point in this vicinity, and is used by travelers as a landmark.
6. The roads to Tamsog (117-15, 47-10 approximately), Yugujur, and Darigangga (113-, 45-) go as far as the border and then disappear.
7. In 1944 there were about 40 Lamas at Dabus Sume, and about 20 at Borhan Shang Sume. During the 'extracting season' a village of approximately 50-60 tents appears on the edge of the lake.

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